

2008 Minority Business Awards

"RISING STAR" CATEGORY

Application Form

Applicant Company: _____

Company Contact Name: _____

Title/Position: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Name, Organization, Phone of person nominating applicant *(if different from above)*:

Certifications: *(Please check all those that apply)*

- Applicant is a for-profit minority-owned business (as defined by the state) located in Wisconsin.
- Applicant company has been in business 4 years or less.
- Applicant is current on any tax and government loan obligations.

Signature: _____
(Signed by a company representative)

TO APPLY, WRITE A BRIEF NARRATIVE RESPONDING TO THE CRITERIA ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE.
(NOT TO EXCEED 2 PAGES)

PLEASE SUBMIT THIS COVER PAGE AND WRITTEN RESPONSE BY MONDAY, AUGUST 11, 2008 TO:
Kema Williams, Wisconsin Department of Commerce
PO Box 7970, Madison, WI, 53707
fax to 608-264-6151 or email to kema.williams@wisconsin.gov.

Questions regarding submission, contact:
Kema Williams - Ph: 608-267-9550
Carol Dunn - Ph: 608-267-0297

Responding to the four criteria below, provide a narrative that describes why your company is a “rising star” – an innovative or creative company on a track to growth and success. (limit 2 pages)

Instructions: Please write **no more than two pages**. Use each criterion as a heading, and address each criterion in order in your narrative. You may use bullet points under the headings if it makes sense. *(Please type your response; use 11 point or larger type size, and 1 inch or greater side margins.)*

- A. Innovation.** In a sentence, state your company’s reason for being in business (its business mission). Then, describe your company’s product, service, or its business model and why it is innovative, distinctive, or creative. Explain what customer problem it is solving or what market need it is satisfying, and why it is better and more innovative than competitor’s products, services, or business models. Describe the effort involved in bringing your innovation to market.
- B. Growth Potential.** Describe your company’s market opportunity and its potential for growth over the next 3-5 years, based on your business plan and factors in the business environment. Include such factors as:
- Market drivers that are creating a demand for your product or service
 - Target market opportunity: current and anticipated market size and customer segments served.
 - Current and forecast number of customers
 - Historic and expected employment growth at your firm.
 - Historic and forecast growth of your service territory.
 - Historic and planned growth of your product or service lines.
- C. Progress.** Identify company’s founding date. Describe the company’s progress towards achieving critical business milestones in the areas of sales, profitability, and operations management. Identify 2-5 key obstacles your company has overcome to get beyond start-up to the next level of business sophistication. Explain how you mastered these challenges.
- D. Business WOW! Factor.** Describe what makes your company special in terms of workplace environment, salary/benefit packages, customer service, quality standards, management systems, “green business” (environmentally friendly)—and any other business factors that distinguish your company.

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